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LETTER DATED 20 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement by the President of the European Union on the recent fighting in Kosovo, issued on 20 July 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the President of the European Union on recent fighting in Kosovo issued on 20 July 1998

The European Union is appalled and dismayed by reports of intensified hostilities in Kosovo over the last weekend which have - according to reports - left up to 450 people unaccounted for, several dozen of whom seem to have been killed.

The European Union condemns the alleged recent infiltrations of several hundred fighters from Albania into Kosovo territory as well as the violence in the Albanian-Yugoslav border area and at Orahovac/Rahovec, and calls urgently both on the armed Kosovar groups and on the Serbian authorities to exercise restraint and to cease hostilities immediately. The European Union is particularly concerned that Yugoslav army shelling has allegedly violated the international border and demands from the Serbian and Yugoslav authorities an immediate halt to such action. It calls on the Yugoslav and Albanian Governments to do everything in their power to reduce tensions over Kosovo.

The European Union recalls that violent action will not enhance the prospects for a negotiated solution of the Kosovo problem. Indeed, each new casualty will render an early solution more difficult.

The priorities now are a cessation of hostilities and the start of a meaningful political process.